

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAM #4227/01 2911006
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 181006Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0622
INFO RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0814
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 4658
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0255

UNCLAS AMMAN 004227

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FOR NEA/ELA, NEA/IPA, AND NEA/RA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [ECIN](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [SENV](#) [KWBG](#) [JO](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: Israeli Embassy, Japanese, and Jordanian views on Peace Valley and Peace Corridor

REF: A) TEL AVIV 2999
B) NEA/RA Lawson 10/16 email on Red-Dead
C) TEL AVIV 2912
D) TEL AVIV 1039
E) AMMAN 1150
F) TOKYO 1005
G) TOKYO 6576

(U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for internet distribution.

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Following Israeli President Peres' late September briefing of Ambassadors Jones and Hale and subsequent request for the U.S. to encourage Jordanian progress on implementing elements of the Peace Valley Project, Post has engaged Government of Jordan (GOJ) officials, representatives of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Israeli Embassy officials in Amman on the status on the Peace Valley/Peace Corridor proposals. There is general agreement on the basic pillars of the plan - economic stability for Palestinian areas, establishment of an agro-industrial park in the Jericho area, reconstruction of the Damiya Bridge, and construction of an airstrip to transport products to Gulf markets - but confusion abounds about the scope of the overall project, its name, and who is responsible for next steps. Israel, or at least President Peres, seems to favor a broad array of projects including the Red Sea-Dead Sea water conveyance project, JICA is focusing on feasibility studies for the agro-industrial park, and Jordan's priority is the Damiya Bridge. Post observes that the key partners are not communicating well, and absent progress and commitments at the next meeting of the four parties (Israel, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Japan), the project/s could well wither away. END SUMMARY.

Corridor for Peace and Prosperity, or Peace Valley?

12. (U) The Japan-proposed "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative (aka Peace Corridor) aims to improve the economic stability of the Palestinian areas (reftels). During the August 15 ministerial-level meeting of the Four Party Consultative Unit, the parties agreed to the establishment of an agro-industrial park in Jericho, as well as several supporting programs such as the reconstruction of the Damiya Bridge, and the development of an airstrip in the Northern Jordan Valley (on the Jordanian side) to transport products to Gulf markets. Meanwhile, Peres has been championing the "Peace Valley" concept to include infrastructure and tourism projects along the 520 kilometers stretching from the Red Sea to the northern Israeli-Jordanian border. Peres' program is broader in scope, and includes projects such as expansion of Jordan's Aqaba International Airport to serve both Aqaba and the Israeli city of Eilat as a "Peace Airport."

13. (SBU) COMMENT: These differing views of the Peace Corridor are

further complicated by nomenclature. Many of Embassy Amman's interlocutors use Peace Valley and Peace Corridor interchangeably. The Peace Corridor can be considered a sub-set of the Peace Valley.
END COMMENT.

Jordan and JICA: Similar Views and Objectives

14. (SBU) During an October 3 meeting, JICA representatives informed EconCouns of Israeli agreement to rebuild the Damiya Bridge. JICA reported no consensus, however, on the next steps in proceeding with reconstruction efforts. Jordanian officials confirmed to EconCouns that Jordan is ready to begin the necessary studies and designs, and seeks Israeli cooperation in arranging for a technical site investigation. Jordan is waiting for the GOI to confirm that it is ready to proceed with construction, verify that the immediate surroundings are free of mines, and facilitate a joint visit to the site in order to allow a Jordanian team to take aerial images of the site. While Jordan is waiting for Israeli action, Israel believes that the ball is in Jordan's court.

The View from Israel's Embassy in Amman

15. (SBU) Israeli Embassy PolCouns (and acting DCM) Itai Bartov reconfirmed to EconOff on October 4 GOI support for Peace Valley/Corridor programs as economic development tools to bolster improvements in the political climate. He tempered his comments by noting the projects will require patience and a long time perspective. Noting that the Economic Office of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for the initiative, he chided the Palestinians for always including political aspects to strictly economic discussions, and commented that the Jordanians, while cooperative in select areas (narcotics, agriculture, avian influenza, and medical exchanges), were difficult to engage on many

of the Peace Valley/Peace Corridor programs. He also provided the following status reports:

(U) Agro-industrial park in Jericho: there is good cooperation on promoting this under the Peace Corridor framework, and the project is on track with a JICA-led feasibility assessment.

(SBU) Damiya bridge reconstruction: the Israeli army has overcome its initial reluctance to this project. The Israeli acceptance was conveyed to Jordan at the August 2007, four-party Dead-Sea meeting. NOTE: Bartov was not familiar with the GOJ requests in paragraph 4 above. END NOTE.

(SBU) Aqaba/Eilat "Peace Airport": The Secretary General of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism is coming to Amman on October 22 to discuss tourism cooperation. This joint airport is one of the agenda items. Bartov was quick to note this was a bilateral initiative (referred to in the Peace Valley) and would not involve the Palestinians.

16. (SBU) Previous discussions with GOJ and Israeli interlocutors have described Israeli-Jordan discussions to develop an MOU for the Peace Valley. A second meeting of the four-party technical experts was also expected later in October. Bartov was not able to provide additional information.

Red-Dead Pipeline: In or Out?

17. (SBU) The Jordanians have consistently stated that the Red Sea-Dead Sea water conveyance project to generate power and transport water was not/not within the Peace Valley/Peace Corridor framework. Peres' Peace Valley initiative, however, highlights the Red-Dead as one of the national priority projects for Israel. Bartov believed it unlikely the project could be fast-tracked outside the World Bank framework. NOTE: A private-sector company is pitching a proposal, with Peres' support, for a \$2 billion Red-Dead project which would short-circuit the planned World Bank feasibility study and subsequent tendering process (ref A). Jordanian officials are reviewing this proposal, but without prejudice to the World Bank effort. END NOTE.

Visit Amman's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.gov.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman/>

HALE